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France-Iraq: The two countries are developing closer military ties and are concluding an agreement for oil exploration in Iraq.

Iraqi Chief of Staff Hasan Sabri is heading a military delegation which arrived in Paris on 5 December for a ten-day visit. [redacted]

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[redacted] The French government-controlled oil company, ERAP, tentatively signed a prospecting agreement in late November covering concessionary areas formerly controlled by the Iraq Petroleum Company. Oil has not yet been found in this area.

The French Government also has an interest in another French oil company, CFP, which has been negotiating for rights in Iraq's North Rumaila field. The Iraq Petroleum Company lays claim to this potentially very productive field. CFP is planning to send a team to Baghdad this weekend in an effort to wrap up the Rumaila deal.

In a further gesture indicative of warming relations, President Abd Ar-Rahman Arif has invited General De Gaulle to visit Baghdad. A government spokesman in Paris indicated, however, that such a visit is a long way off. [redacted]

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NOTE

Congo (Kinshasa): The Belgians apparently plan to evacuate as many mercenaries as possible from Rwanda, despite the outcry in Africa such a move might cause. The Belgian effort follows a Rwandan ultimatum on 5 December that the mercenaries must be removed within 48 hours. A Sabena DC-6 now in Rwanda would be used. There are an estimated 120 mercenaries detained in Rwanda. Congolese reaction to such an airlift could be explosive.

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